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YOU CAN RIDE ...CREATES A STUDENT'S OWN INDEPENDENCE DAY

(Bel Air, MD - June 9, 2008) - - Shortly after Memorial Day, Harford County Executive David Craig, along with Mary Chance, Director of the Department of Community Services, and Michael Hannan, manager of Harford Transit, congratulated the 100th participant in the *You Can Ride Harford Transit* program.

Brian Parks is a student in

Harford County Public School's Future Link Post-Secondary Program, which is designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities who will receive their Maryland Certificate at the age of 21. The program includes instruction in academics and life skills, as well as work experience, with increased independence as the goal for each student.

"Brian has turned a volunteer training position at Bull on the Beach into a paid summer job due to his enthusiasm and excellent work ethic," said Robin Nemser, Special Educator with Harford County Public Schools. "He attended Edgewood High School prior to entering the Future Link Program at the beginning of the school year. He is a very friendly, outgoing young man who looks forward to traveling to and from work on his own."

However, while Brian was very excited when he obtained a paid summer job at Bull on the Beach, he lacked the regular transportation needed to get to his place of employment.

That's when Harford Transit stepped in with the *You Can Ride* program. This program provides individualized travel training to help persons become independent when using the Harford Transit system.

For the past three years, Cheryl Gable, Harford Transit Mobility Trainer, has been providing customized travel training for individuals who rely on public transportation.

"I am very excited and proud of all the individuals who have worked to achieve a more independent way of life," stated Gable. "Many people now have direct access to jobs, medical appointments and shopping. In the past they had to rely on parents, family, friends or agencies to go anywhere. They have faced huge challenges and have overcome obstacles that for them were very scary at times," she continued. "I am honored and humbled to have a job where I

can help change lives in such a positive manner and proud to be associated with Harford County's Transit system, which strives to expand our citizens' resources."

When County Executive David Craig awarded a commemorative pin to Brian to recognize his accomplishment, Brian said, "Now this is my Independence Day! I can ride the bus and keep my job at Bull on the Beach." Brian will begin his new job on June 16 and, thanks to the *You Can Ride* program, will do it on his own.

With a successful track record for the *You Can Ride* program, Harford Transit has created a Train the Trainer Travel Training workshop. This workshop's curriculum is designed to train agency and program staff, support group members and faith-based organization leaders to teach individuals and small groups to use Harford Transit fixed bus routes. The training is meant to be interactive and to address the participant's own lack of familiarity with public transportation. Participants will learn about Harford Transit, how to use bus schedules to plan a trip, and to teach their clients/constituents to use the bus to travel to employment, shopping, medical appointments, etc. Participants will receive electronic copies of individualized schedules and other handouts to use when they train their clients to use the bus. For more information or to schedule training, contact Cheryl Gable at 410-612-1742.

Harford Transit operates ten public bus routes serving Harford County and beyond - use Harford Transit to travel to Aberdeen, Abingdon, Bel Air, Edgewood, Havre de Grace, Joppatowne, Perryman, Riverside, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Eastpoint Mall and White Marsh Mall. Use Harford Transit to link with MTA's Flyer and MARC Train services to Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

Harford Transit, a division within the Department of Community Services, provides services in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Buses are wheelchair accessible. This service is provided by Harford Transit for the general public and approved for operation by the Maryland Public Service Commission.

The Harford County Department of Community Services was established in 1979 via Executive Order and works daily to meet the needs of our seniors, youth, persons with disabilities and those struggling to overcome addiction. The Department works with federal, state, local and private agencies to ensure our county continues to evolve and remains dedicated to providing the best possible services for our citizens and community.